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Summary

¶1. (U) In a series of meetings with officials from the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for Women and
Social Welfare (MWSW), and the Ministry of Labor and
Transport, Emboff delivered talking points and the final text
of Nepal's country narrative from the 2007 Trafficking in
Person (TIP) Report. Emboff drew attention to the areas of
improvement identified in the 2007 report. Each of the
Government of Nepal (GON) officials expressed their concern
with the persistence of trafficking in Nepal, but stressed
that the problem was multi-faceted and based in larger
socio-economic problems. The GON officials all emphasized
that the open border with India, the absence of livelihood
options for rural women, and the promise of lucrative
employment abroad made it very difficult to combat TIP in
Nepal. Emboff was informed that Parliament was expected to
pass an "Anti-Trafficking Act" and a new "Foreign Employment
Act" in its next session. The enactment of these laws would
support the GON's efforts to combat trafficking. Emboff was
also told that Parliament had been declared September 6
"Anti-Trafficking Day."

Poverty Core Cause of TIP in Nepal

¶2. (U) In a June 12 meeting with Hira Bhadur Thapa, Joint
Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Emboff delivered

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the 2007 Trafficking in Person's (TIP) Report and noted
Nepal's Tier 2 ranking for 2007. Thapa told Emboff that the
GON was committed to fighting TIP, but stressed that one of
the core causes of human trafficking was poverty and the GON
could not, alone, address this problem. Emboff acknowledged
that political instability and lack of resources hindered the
GON's efforts, but emphasized that the GON needed to expand
its efforts to combat TIP, including vigorously investigating
and adequately punishing recruitment agencies and corrupt
officials. Emboff also noted that the MFA could increase
protection efforts for victims by assisting in their
repatriation and adequately training government officials
posted in destination countries.

Lack of Options Makes Rural Women Vulnerable to TIP

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¶3. (U) In a July 5 meeting with Mahendra Prasad Shrestha,
Director General for the Department of Women Development,
Emboff highlighted the areas for improvement identified in
the TIP Report. Shrestha told Emboff that he expected
Parliament to pass much needed amendments to the
anti-trafficking law during its next session. Shrestha
stated that trafficking would continue to be difficult to
control until there were options for employment and
rehabilitation for rural girls. He noted that the GON was
working on a new project for rural women in cooperation with
the UN. The Director General also expressed his support for
the women's police cell, but commented that without adequate
resources the cell could not accomplish much. He explained
that, because the money went through the Ministry of Home
Affairs, very little ever reached the women's cell. He
suggested that if the funding came directly through the
Ministry for Women and Social Welfare, it would be better
utilized. Shrestha also announced the GON had declared
Bhadra 20 "Anti-Trafficking Day." (Note: This year Bhadra 20
coincides with September 6 in our calendar. End Note)

Open Border with India Contributes to TIP

¶4. (U) In a July 13 meeting Bishnu Prasad Lamsal, Joint
Secretary for the Ministry of Labour and Transport, and

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Emboff discussed Nepal's expanding migrant labor force and
the workers' vulnerability to trafficking. Emboff emphasized
that the GON needed to expand its efforts to investigate and
adequately punish recruitment agencies and employees believed
to be involved in trafficking, as well as corrupt officials
facilitating trafficking. Lamsal acknowledged that many of
the "manpower" companies in Nepal were engaged in

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trafficking, but stated that most of the illegal companies
operated out of India, making it very difficult for the GON
to regulate. The Secretary noted that there was a new
"Foreign Employment Act" (FEA) in Parliament that, when
passed, would provide increased protection for migrant
laborers. In addition, the government had recently entered
into labor agreements for the protection of Nepali workers in
the United Arab Emirate and Malaysia. Lamsal added the new
FEA would provide the necessary "legal basis" for the
operation of the Ministry's "labor desk" at the international
airport in Kathmandu. The desk provides information to
migrant workers before they leave Nepal and, in the future,
will facilitate a much needed "official" worker's
registration system. The Secretary acknowledged that these
efforts only address migrant workers leaving by air and
emphasized that the open border with India remains the
biggest challenge. Lamsal also told Emboff that the Ministry
recognized the need for more public awareness programs and
was working with the United Nations Development Fund for
Women (UNIFEM) on an education program for women migrant
workers.

Comment

¶5. (U) The GON and the political parties are well aware of
Nepal's growing migrant labor force and the importance of
remittances to Nepal's economy. However, the GON needs to
increase its efforts to educate and protect those most
vulnerable to trafficking on the potential dangers of working
abroad. The 2007 TIP report gave us an excellent reason to
remind officials to do more to combat this vicious practice.
HUGINS